United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends "restructuring" of United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission by replacing unarmed observers with three armed infantry units, to reinforce Mission for rapid response to violations of boundary between two countries.

+ General Assembly admits Czech and Sloval Republics as United Nations members; at flag raising ceremony, Secretary-General welcomes both countries' commitment to United Nations Charter.

+ Co-Chairmen of Yugoslav Conference will travel to Zagreb and Sarajevo tomorrow to help mediate dispute between Muslim-led Bosnian Government and Croats.

+ After more than 48 hours in captivity, four UNTAC naval observers are released by National Alliance of Democratic Kampuchea.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended, in a further special report to the Security Council, dated 18 January, to reinforce the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) with three infantry battalions, together with an increase in headquarters and support elements, comprising a total deployment of 3645 personnel in the area. According to the proposal, this military personnel would replace the current UNIKOM's unarmed observers in order to enable the Mission to rapidly respond to violations of the border between Iraq and Kuwait.

The Secretary-General's recommendation follows Security Council's request of 11 January that Mr. Boutros-Ghali explore urgently "the possibilities for restoring" UNIKOM to its full strength in order to enhance its effectiveness in cases of emergency.

In its "restructured" format, UNIKOM would undertake to prevent or redress small scale violations of the demilitarized zone or the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait. It would also try to prevent or redress "problems that might arise from the presence of Iraqi installations and Iraqi civilians

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and their assets in the demilitarized zone on the Kuwaiti side of the newly demarcated boundary", suggests the report.

Arguing that the proposed task "could not be performed by unarmed observers", the report says that, should the Council vote in favour of the recommendations and decide that UNIKOM's present mandate does not permit an adequate response to violations "as have occurred", then UNIKOM would require a capacity to take "physical action".

The current mandate of UNIKOM observers is to observe any hostile or potentially hostile action mounting from the territory of one State to the other. In case of violations, the unarmed observers report and make representations. With regard to the incidents occurred since the beginning of the month, stresses the report, protests and representations were for the most part ineffective because UNIKOM's interlocutors were powerless to influence a course of events which had been set in motion at the highest levels of the Iraqi Government.

The Secretary-General also emphasizes that his proposal is based on the assumption that the Government of Iraq as well as the Government of Kuwait would undertake to cooperate with the restructured Mission. In the absence of such cooperation, the report says, "it would become impossible for UNIKOM to carry out its functions, in which case the Security Council would need to consider alternative measures".

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The General Assembly this morning admitted the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic to membership in the United Nations. It also devided between the two new Members the seats on various subsidiary organs held by the former Czechoslovakia, which ceased to exist on 31 December 1992.

Following the admission of their countries to membership in the United Nations, the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Josef Zieleniec, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Milan Knazko, stated that the peaceful division of the former Czechoslovakia was a demonstration of mutual tolerance and the democratic and political maturity of the two nations.

At a flag raising ceremony this afternoon, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, while welcoming the commitment of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic to the United Nations Charter and its principles, expressed the hope that both Republics would "follow the tradition of internationalism" shown by their peoples. "That tradition and your sensitivity to international politics has much to contribute to the United Nations", the Secretary-General said.

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Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, are expected to travel to Zagreb and Sarajevo tomorrow to

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help mediate the dispute that has broken out between the Muslim-led Bosnian Government and the Croats, according to the Co-Chairmen's Spokesman, Fred Eckhardt. The Co-Chairmen were leaving for Zagreb at the "request of the parties involved", said the Spokesman.

Regarding the resumption of the Geneva peace talks on former Yugoslavia, a United Nations Spokesman told correspondents today at Headquarters that no definite date had been set, but that the talks could resume "probably over the weekend."

The peace talks between representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), as well as the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference, began initially on 2 January in Geneva. The discussions are focusing on three critical components: the constitutional principles; the delimitation of provinces; and arrangements for implementing and monitoring a cessation of hostilities.

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After more than 48 hours in captivity, four UNTAC naval observers who were detained by a unit of the National Alliance of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) were released this afternoon.

According to a spokesman for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the four observers -- two British, a Chilean and a Cambodian interpreter -- were detained since Sunday after trying for several weeks to discuss the military situation in the province of Kompong Thom with the NADK.

This was the sixth time that United Nations personnel were held by the NADK in a two-month period.

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